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Swiss To Bare Secrets In General's Trial
WEST PALM BEACH, Fla.

An embezzlement battle between the federal government and a retired Air Force general moves this week to Switzerland where the normally secretive Swiss bankers have agreed to discuss a military account.

Maj. Gen. Richard B. Collins, 53, of Fort Lauderdale, is charged with embezzling \$450,000 from a secret Air Force bank account while he was with the military in Switzerland from 1975 to 1978.

He says the money was spent legitimately in Southeast Asia and elsewhere on secret CIA operations coordinated by his Air Force office.

Participants in the case are going to Geneva to take sworn pre-trial testimony from bank officials about Collins' handling of the government account, The Miami Herald reported Sunday.

Geneva is the headquarters of Lockheed Aircraft International A.G., whose top executives managed the money for the Air Force beginning in 1965, according to Collins' attorney, Stephen Bronis.

Lockheed Aircraft International A.G. is a European subsidiary of the U.S. defense contractor and aircraft manufacturer Lockheed Corp., based in Burbank, Calif.

Under a 1977 treaty for mutual assistance in criminal matters, Swiss authorities arranged for the bankers to be questioned by attorneys for both sides. U.S. District Judge James C. Paine appointed a retired District of Columbia appellate judge as special commissioner to oversee the depositions in Geneva.

Bronis said the trip is a waste of time. "A few prosecutors want to get a trip to Switzerland out of this. I can't see why the taxpayers of this country should pay for six people to go to Switzerland for a week on a case that's going down the tubes. I think that's an insult."

So far, much of the proceedings have been shrouded in secrecy because they included classified documents. But Paine has ruled the documents can be brought out in a public trial, set for July 18.

The government has appealed that ruling with the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta. If that fails, the government may consider dropping the case rather than go to trial, attorneys have said.